

Infanticide is most likely to benefit replacements when the individual whose offspring are killed has little option but to re-nest with the replacing individual. Infanticide by replacing males has also been viewed as a male reproductive strategy whereby males stop females from investing in the offspring of other males (Rowher, 1986). In the case of hoopoes, the time of nesting usually starts from March and continues till May (Ali and

Ripley, 1987) hence it was still very early and it is likely that the killer hoopoe was a replacement male which was trying to speed up the return of the female to sexual receptivity.

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12. FRUGIVORY BY THE GREAT BLACK WOODPECKER *DRYOCOPUS JAVENSIS*

The diet of the great black woodpecker (or the whitebellied woodpecker) *Dryocopus javensis* consists mostly of ants, termites, and grubs and pupae of wood-boring beetles and very rarely honey bees (Ali and Ripley 1983). There is no specific mention of fruit in the diet of this large woodpecker though several woodpeckers have been reported to consume fruit (Short 1982).

During the course of my study on woodpeckers of the Western Ghats, I had, on two different occasions, seen the great black woodpecker feeding on fruit.

On April 27, 1995, I found a family of four (2 adult and 2 young) great black woodpeckers at Anakkayam near Sholayar in Kerala. They were moving close to the Forest Station and were not the least bothered by the presence of the forest staff who lived in the station. I noticed the birds on a *Macaranga peltata* tree just a few metres from the buildings feeding on the dark ripe fruit. Both the adults and the young ones were plucking the berries and feeding on them.

The second instance of frugivory was noticed on May 2, 1996 at the Someshwara

Wildlife Sanctuary in Dakshin Kannada district of Karnataka. A male great black woodpecker was seen perched on a fruiting *Olea dioica* tree and feeding on the ripe purple-coloured fruit. It was observed for over 10 minutes on this tree and appeared to be feeding most of the time.

Short (1982) reports that about 27% of the diet of the related pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) of North America consists of various fruits, berries and nuts. However, there is no mention of fruit in the diet of the Eurasian black (*D. martius*) or whitebellied woodpeckers. Fruit may be used by the great black woodpecker to supplement insect food which is perhaps scarce in the late dry season in the Western Ghats.

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13. ATTEMPT BY REDVENTED BULBUL *PYCNONOTUS CAFER* TO FEED ON A YOUNG HOUSE GECKO *HEMIDACTYLUS FLAVIVIRIDIS*

The food of the redvented bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* consists of fruits and berries, flower nectar, and large insects. Among the food brought for a nestling was a young lizard 9 cm long which caused the death of a 5-6 days old chick attempting to swallow it (HANDBOOK OF BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Ali and Ripley 1983, Vol. 6, pp 85-88).

However, on May 20, 1999 around 0830 hrs, a bird was seen moving from one flower bed to another in our residence at Durg, Madhya Pradesh. For quite some time, the bird behaved in this manner. Ultimately, it approached a rose bed close to the boundary wall where it perched, still looking here and there. Soon it flew down to the gap between the rose plant and a bush, and pecked at a house gecko hatchling about 40 mm long. After some attempts, it managed to

catch hold of the gecko and carried it to the wall where it swung the victim's head violently from side to side and even struck it against the wall. All through, it was very agitated, and soon the crippled young gecko was placed on the ground. The bird attempted to swallow it, but the morsel appeared unmanageable, so it was left.

Similar observations were made by my brother in his garden at Raipur some time ago, but in this case, the bird kept itself stationary for quite some time before attempting to capture the juvenile gecko.

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14. FLOCKING AND ALTITUDINAL MOVEMENTS OF THE BLACK BULBUL *HYPSSIPETES MADAGASCARIENSIS* IN THE SOUTHERN WESTERN GHATS, INDIA

The black bulbul (*Hypsipetes madagascariensis*) is one among several species of Indian hill birds that exhibit seasonal altitudinal movements. In the Western Ghats it breeds between 1000 m and the summits during March to June, descending to the foothills in the non-breeding season (Ali and Ripley 1983). Being mainly dependant on fruit for food, it also shares the penchant for short term local nomadic movements seen among frugivorous species, possibly tracking changes in food supply over several localities. It has been noted in the Himalayan subspecies (*H. m. psaroides*) that during the non-breeding season, the bulbuls

move "in parties of six to ten, but sometimes numbering up to a hundred individuals ..." (Ali and Ripley 1983). Here I describe some observations on flocking behaviour and daily altitudinal movements of black bulbuls in the Sengaltheri area of the Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve in southern Tamil Nadu.

The study area in the southern extremity of the Western Ghats mountain range is ca. 1000 m above msl. The vegetation is of the medium elevation wet evergreen forest type described by Pascal (1988). Systematic observations on 600 m long line transects and point counts (between 900 and 1350 m altitude) were supplemented